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17 Sept 84

Congress of the United States

Committee on Foreign Affairs

House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Executive Registry
84-9209

Mr. William Casey
Director
C.I.A.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Casey:

The Subcommittees on Asian and Pacific Affairs and on Human Rights and International Organizations would like CIA and INR to testify at a closed intelligence briefing on the situation and outlook in India -- particularly in the Punjab. This briefing will be held at 2:00 pm on September 25, 1984 in Room 2200 Rayburn House Office Building.

The Subcommittees would like you to address the following issues and questions in your prepared testimony:

1. Has there been a substantial increase in communal tension and violence in India in recent years? If so, please describe the major outbreaks and the basic reasons for such rising tensions, and whether you see such violence as cyclical in nature or as part of a long-term trend.

2. What is the size of the Sikh community, and where in India are the major concentrations of Sikhs? What is the Sikh proportion of the total Indian population?

3. What are the basic causes of the conflict between the Sikhs and the Government of India? Please outline the development of the conflict, the issues in dispute, and the positions and policies of the key groups -- such as the Akali Dal and the Sikh student organization -- both within the Sikh community and those opposed to some or all of the Sikh demands, including the Indian government?

4. In your judgement, is the conflict basically a religious dispute or a political one, or both? If the latter is the case, please spell out how the two elements are linked.

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5. Has there been systematic discrimination against the Sikhs by the national or provincial governments, as some Sikhs have charged? If so, in what areas of life? How substantially has the proportion of Sikhs in the armed forces, police and other government bodies declined since independence? Is this the result of discrimination by the Indian government, or the result of recruiting from all elements of Indian society rather than only from the "martial races" as was done by the British?

6. Please describe the extent of the rising violence between Sikhs and Hindus during the past year or so. How many people of each community were killed during this period? How many Sikhs and military personnel were killed in the battle involving the Golden Temple? Were all those killed within the Temple area involved in the fighting, or were religious pilgrims among those killed? How do your figures compare with those put forth by Sikh groups and the Indian government?

7. Was there an organized Sikh terrorist movement? If so, please describe its objectives and structure. What was its relationship to Sant Bhindranwale? How much support -- and how much sympathy -- did the terrorist movement have among the Sikh population before the attack on the Golden Temple? How much support was there for an independent Sikh state before the attack on the Golden Temple? Has the use of military force against the Golden Temple increased or decreased Sikh support for terrorism or for an independent state? Is there any possibility the government of India would agree to such a demand?

8. How widespread and serious were the desertions and mutinies by Sikhs in the miliary services? What are the likely military and political consequences of these desertions?

9. Some Sikhs have charged that much or even all of the terrorism was staged by the Indian government to give it an excuse to crack down on the Sikh movement for greater autonomy. Do you think there is any truth in such charges?

10. In your judgment, did the Indian government have any viable alternatives to using military force to capture those inside the Golden Temple? If so, what were they? Were there opportunities for a political settlement earlier? If so, what were they, and why were the Sikhs and the Indian government unable to reach such a settlement?

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11. What are the prospects for a political settlement in the next year or so? Are there any Sikh leaders with substantial support in their community willing to deal with the present Indian government? What effect is the conflict likely to have on India's forthcoming national elections?

12. What do you see as the short and longer-term political and economic consequences of this and other communal conflicts for India? Do they pose a serious threat to its territorial integrity?

13. Did Sikhs inside India receive financial or other support from Sikhs living in other countries? If so, how substantial was it, and what impact did it have on the dispute within India?

14. The Indian government has charged that the Sikh terrorists were supported by Pakistan and other foreign powers desiring to weaken and divide India, and press reports have stated that Indian intelligence officials have claimed that CIA was involved? Do you think there is any truth in such charges? If so, on what evidence do you base your conclusions? Do you think the Indian government believes such charges, or has made them only to blame others for matters it was unable to resolve on terms and in ways desirable to it?

15. Have militant Sikhs living in the United States threatened Indian government officials serving here? Have they threatened more moderate Sikhs? If they have done either of the above, please describe what they have done or threatened to do.

Please be prepared to summarize your statement in approximately ten minutes.

Sincerely,

Gus Yatron
Chairman
Subcommittee on Human Rights
and International Organizations

Stephen J. Solarz
Chairman
Subcommittee on Asian
and Pacific Affairs

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